Emergency Management and Response Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EMR-ISAC)

INFOGRAM 31-08 August 14, 2008

NOTE: *This INFOGRAM will be distributed weekly to provide members of the Emergency Services Sector with information concerning the protection of their critical infrastructures. For further information, contact the Emergency Management and Response- Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EMR-ISAC) at (301) 447-1325 or by e-mail at* emr-isac@dhs.gov.

Mail Bomb Screening

Although the chances may be remote, no American community or Emergency Services Sector (ESS) organization is immune from receiving a bomb in the mail. In recent years, a small number of explosive devices have been mailed, which resulted in death, injury, and the destruction of property. Because of the potential threat posed by mail processing at any location—not just official Post Offices, the Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EMR-ISAC) reviewed the guidelines provided by the United States Postal Service (USPS).

What can ESS personnel and community employees do to help prevent a mail bomb disaster within their departments and agencies? The USPS writes: "First, consider whether you or your organization could be a possible target." Some motives for mail bombs include disgruntlement, revenge, extortion, love triangles, business disputes, social ideals, etc. The source of mail bombs may or may not be connected to a domestic or transnational terrorist.

The USPS advises that organizations and their personnel "keep in mind that a bomb can be enclosed in either a package or an envelope, and its outward appearance is limited only by the imagination of the bomber." However, some of the characteristics of mail bombs may actually assist the identification of a suspect mailing. To apply these distinct attributes effectively to protect human and physical infrastructures, "it is important to know the type of mail your organization receives." The different characteristics of a mail bomb can be seen at http://www.pa-aware.org/resources/pdfs/USPS.pdf.

If you are suspicious of a piece of mail and unable to verify the contents with the addressee or sender, the EMR-ISAC offers the following USPS rules to protect life and preserve property:

- Do not open the envelope or package.
- Isolate the mailing and evacuate the immediate area.
- Do not put it in water or a confined space such as a desk drawer or filing cabinet.
- Open windows in the immediate area to assist in venting potential explosive gases.
- Contact your local police department if you have any reason to believe a letter or package is suspicious.

ESS Equipment Evaluation Tool

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Commercial Direct Assistance Program (CEDAP) helps emergency departments and agencies in smaller communities acquire and use commercially available equipment to prevent, deter, and respond to terrorist attacks. It is supported by the System Assessment and Validation for Emergency Responders (SAVER) program, created to help responders make procurement decisions based on objective assessments and validations of commercial equipment and systems.

The Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EMR-ISAC) maintains that equipment is part of the physical assets component of Emergency Services Sector (ESS) critical infrastructures. Therefore, the EMR-ISAC studied the mission of the SAVER program: to conduct impartial, practitioner-relevant, and operationally oriented assessments and validations of emergency responder equipment; and, provide information that enables decision-makers and responders to better select, procure, use, and maintain emergency responder equipment.

The SAVER Program established a network of technical agents who perform assessment and validation activities to provide information on equipment that falls within the categories listed in the DHS Authorized Equipment List (AEL), a list of allowable equipment expenditures for 11 DHS grant programs. SAVER focuses primarily on two main questions for the emergency responder community: "What equipment is available?" and "How does it perform?"

End-users can research products from more than 18 categories. When a product is selected, e.g., lifting airbags, a composite is provided for each. With the help of a weighting scale, users can numerically assign importance based on affordability, capability, deployability, maintainability, and usability in decision-making. Knowledge links are also provided for related DHS grants, applicable standards, relevant web links, and related target capabilities. Available at the SAVER web site are newsletters, summaries, highlights, and an e-mail sign-up for alert notification of new public documents added to the SAVER Document Library (https://www.dhs-saver.info/Default.aspx).

Firefighter Fatality and Injury Reports

The U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) released "Firefighter Fatalities in the United States in 2007" this week, part of its series of annual studies of on-duty firefighter fatalities. According to the calendar year 2007 report, the Emergency Services Sector (ESS) lost 118 firefighters in Line-of-Duty (LODD) deaths:

- 68 volunteer firefighters and 50 career firefighters died while on duty.
- 21 firefighters died in 7 incidents that claimed the lives of 2 or more firefighters.
- 11 firefighters died in activities involving brush, grass, or wildland firefighting.
- 76 firefighters died while engaged in activities related to emergency incidents.
- 38 firefighters died while engaged in activities at the scene of a fire.
- 26 firefighters died while responding to or returning from emergency incidents.
- 11 firefighters died while engaged in training activities.
- 15 firefighters died after the conclusion of their on-duty activity.
- 52 firefighters suffered heart attacks, the most frequent cause of death for 2007.

This year's report includes information on the hazards to firefighters caused by their lack of seatbelt use. In 19 of 27 fatalities from vehicle-related incidents where seatbelt status was known, 11 firefighters were confirmed as not wearing seatbelts at the time of the event. The full report can be viewed and downloaded at http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/fireservice/fatalities/statistics/report.shtm (100 pp., 3.76 MB).

Also released this week is the International Association of Fire Fighters' (IAFF) "Contributing Factors to Fire Fighter Line-of-Duty Injury" study, a two-year review of a group of geographically diverse metropolitan departments designed to identify and quantify major factors that contribute to line-of-duty injuries. It found that inadequate situational awareness (37.3%) was the major cause of firefighter injuries. Deficient wellness/fitness (28.5%) and human error (10.6%) were the other most prominent contributing factors. Further, the report states, when clustered according to contributing factors most often occurring together, the lack of communication, standard operating guidelines/procedure violations, protocol breaches, human error, and absence of situational awareness were the most common reasons for injuries. The report is available at http://www.firerescue1.com/data/pdfs/iaffinjuryreport.pdf. (34 pp., 125.5 KB).

The Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EMR-ISAC suggests that the information found in these reports may further the protection of personnel by emergency departments and agencies.

Critical Infrastructure Protection Congress

The Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EMR-ISAC) is a proud sponsor of the Critical Infrastructure Protection Congress, 6-8 October 2008, at the Rio All-Suite Hotel in Las Vegas, Nevada. In conjunction with the National ISAC Council, the EMR-ISAC has participated in the planning of informative and satisfying conference sessions. The theme for the event, "Risk 2.0: Next Generation Threats, Challenges, and Opportunities," serves to highlight the security issues associated with new technologies and applications that affect all critical infrastructure sectors.

This year's Congress offers an opportunity to network with other executives and senior level experts in physical security, information security, business continuity, disaster recovery, governance, compliance disciplines, etc. Furthermore, a noteworthy slate of speakers and panelists has been carefully selected to ensure a rewarding experience for all attendees, particularly those of the emergency services.

Interested members of the Emergency Services Sector can see a detailed brochure containing descriptions of keynote addresses, general sessions, and breakout track sessions, as well as conference registration and hotel reservations at the following Congress web site: http://www.cip2008.com. Please contact the EMR-ISAC at emr-isac@dhs.gov or 301-447-1325 if you have any questions about the event.

REPORTING NOTICE

The National Infrastructure Coordinating Center (NICC) within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Office of Infrastructure Protection is the central point for notifications regarding infrastructure threats, disruptions, intrusions, and suspicious activities. Emergency Services Sector personnel are requested to report any incidents or attacks involving their infrastructures using at least the first and second points of contact seen below:

1) NICC - Voice: 202-282-9201, Fax: 703-487-3570, E-Mail: *nicc@dhs.gov*
2) Your local FBI office - Web: *http://www.fbi.gov/contact/fo/fo.htm*
3) EMR-ISAC - Voice: 301-447-1325, E-Mail: *emr-isac@dhs.gov*, fax: 301-447- 1034, Web: *www.usfa.dhs.gov/subjects/emr-isac*, Mail: J-247, 16825 South Seton Avenue, Emmitsburg, MD 21727